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MAY 1, 2026 | VOLUME 17 | ISSUE 10

YOUR PURCHASE BENEFITS THE VENDORS.
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GROUNDCOVER 15

15 YEARS OF NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP | WASHTENAW COUNTY, MICH.

Augustine, Marie, Steve, and Brandy (left to right) on a Saturday with tea and sack lunch in the courtyard of YDL Michigan Ave, while conducting research about library support services.

A library of support. page 10

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@groundcovernews, include vendor name and vendor #

GROUNDCOVER NEWS

PROVIDING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR SELF-DETERMINED INDIVIDUALS IMPACTED BY POVERTY,
PRODUCING A STREET NEWSPAPER THAT GIVES A PLATFORM TO UNDERREPRESENTED VOICES IN WASHTENAW COUNTY,
PROMOTING AN ACTION TO BUILD A JUST, CARING AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETY.

Groundcover News, a 501(c)(3) organization, was founded in April 2010 as a means to empower low-income persons to make the transitions from homeless to housed, and from jobless to employed.

Vendors purchase each copy of our regular editions of Groundcover News at our office for 50 cents. This money goes towards production costs. Vendors work selling the paper on the street for $2, keeping all income and tips from each sale. Vendors are the main contributors to the paper, and are compensated to write and report.

Street papers like Groundcover News exist in cities all over the United States, as well as in more than 40 other countries, in an effort to raise awareness of the plight of homeless people and combat the increase in poverty. Our paper is a proud member of the International Network of Street Papers.

International Network *of* Street Papers

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WAYS TO SUPPORT

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3. **Volunteer** — You'll learn a lot about our vendors, the newspaper and your community. Interested in volunteering regularly? Fill out the form on our website.
4. **Advertise** your company, organization, event or resource — see rates below.
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6. **Donate items** — A seasonally appropriate list of items most needed at our office and on the street is available on our website. Drop off anytime we're open.

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MEET YOUR VENDOR

Felicia Wilbert, vendor No. 234

In one sentence, who are you?
A loving, giving mother and gramma.

Where do you usually sell Groundcover?
4th and Liberty Street.

When and why did you start selling Groundcover?
2015. Became homeless due to a tragedy. It was a chance for stability.

If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?
Back in time to the signing of the Constitution. I would let them know the effects of the lies they created. And how they harmed people generations into the future.

If you could go back or forward in time, where/when would you go?
1810 to find out who my great, great granddad's parents were.

What's your hottest take?
Groundcover is a job not a handout!

If you could have dinner with one person in history, who would it be?
George Washington.

What is the best day of the year, in your opinion?
My birthday!

Books or movies?
Both of my books, "Billy Don't Kill Us" and "3333 Mystery," need to turn into movies!

What is your favorite thing about yourself?
I am blessed to be able to change employment when it's necessary.

Would you make a good world leader?
Yes.

Is social media a net positive or negative?
Good when it is utilized correctly!

Cold thoughts

CAROLE HITTINGER
Groundcover vendor No. 701

This world that we live in is way too much, at times. It reminds me of times in my life which I have long prayed to never relive. I am disheartened more and more every day by thoughts of what may happen next, or worse, what already has. Justice seems so far from our grasp, even as the land of the free. I am angered and confused so often. Yet, I will not let this keep me down, nor my loved ones.

While it seems impossible — very hard at best — we all must persist. This is neither the life nor love that God would want for ANY of us.

God is a loving and forgiving creator, no matter your personal religious beliefs. Some religions wait still for their savior in human form, and others for his final appearance. I do not believe it really makes a difference what others believe in. We are all in this together, and we're all creations of God —a higher power if you will, or parents if not. The division we feel is across the board, yet so is God's love. This is often overlooked, but that love can bring us together. Of that fact I am sure.

While I do believe we all have free will of our own, we often forget that judgment is not our job. I should clarify: in most situations. There are some who earn a paycheck to serve as judges and the like. While there needs to be some order, far too much is beyond our human ability to control. So why must we continue to judge?

I know that God does not hold grudges: that is human nature alone. While nature seems to hold bias like us humans, it is truly incapable of having emotions. Our actions may be up to us to decide, but grace is something only God seems to extend, these days at least.

It is shameful and silly to think of so many examples, just this past week, in which humans thought that they had the right to throw stones, or even cause harm. Some share only angry words or looks based on another human's beliefs. I have even heard fellow Michiganders claiming credit for freezing temps.

Chuckle I must, and pray even more. I will continue to pray for mercy and grace to flow between us all. God allows us all to change, learn and grow, for our entire lives. While some refuse, I know it is part of the experience of being alive. I know we ALL can come together and realize that judgement is not something we should offer each other. Only love. I still believe love and time can heal all, if we persist.

Opinion: Origins of the USA

SCOOP STEVENS
Groundcover vendor No. 638

The 1772 Somerset vs. Stewart court case was the writing on the wall that slavery was coming to an end in Great Britain's 13 North American colonies. Since all of the colonies had slave owners who profited from slave labor, preserving the institution of slavery was the cause that united the colonies to secede from Great Britain.

Was taxation without representation really the cause that united the original 13 colonies to secede from England? The fact of the matter is, the colonies were well-represented. The taxes imposed were to pay for the 7 Years War (1756-63) that the colonies benefited from. The taxes were not onerous and did not hinder commerce. Preserving the institution of slavery was the cause that united the colonies to secede from England.

Great Britain ended slavery in their colonies in the 1830s. Slave owners were compensated for releasing their slaves and newly freed slaves were given land to start their new lives as free people. This would have happened in America if the colonies had not seceded from Great Britain. Therefore, it seems clear to me that preserving the institution of slavery was the real cause that united the colonies in the War of Independence against Great Britain.

In 1861, 11 southern states entered into a confederation in violation of Article 1 Section 10 of the United States Constitution. President Lincoln put an army in the field to bring these rebelling states back into the Union, which would preserve the institution of slavery because this was the purpose of the United State's existence. As the war dragged on, the original purpose of the war was no longer tenable; this led President Lincoln to issue the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863.

The Civil War only then became a war to free slaves. This was when the United States of America really came into existence as a nation.

Poems by Jason Church

Vocab: Diligent

Rain sleet snow still he went.
Postal workers sure are diligent.

Vocab: Prodigious

You want to go dig he up?
Absolutely no way.
That would take all day.
That guy is prodigious.

Vocab: Stultify

When she goes walking by,
We get them bulging eyes.
She has a way that just stultifies.
Looking better than a cheeseburger and salted fries.

Executive order directs HUD to cut Section 8 spending

STEVEN
Groundcover contributor

On March 2 of this year, the U.S. regime currently in power proposed draconian alterations that would essentially end housing subsidies, also known as Housing Choice Vouchers, or Section 8. The federal Housing Choice program is the largest affordable housing program in the country, funded by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Ending Section 8 would affect more than 3 million people, half of whom are children. This puts all of them at increased risk of falling into homelessness because the pompous pumpkin POTUS said cutting rental aid by 40% and putting a two-year limit on benefits for able-bodied people would "Make America Affordable again." Is he trying to make real estate more affordable for the already-bloated predatory landlords through the inevitable evictions of the working class? Is that going to, as the administration is crowing, make them more self-sufficient? Many landlords oppose this plan as well, preferring to keep long-term government-subsidized, reliable tenants for longer than two years.

"Establishing Flexibility for Implementation of Work Requirements and Term Limits." That's what the plan is called. Government double-talk at its finest — a long, obscure title with big words saying nothing. This is a directive to HUD to get around Congress who already rejected the plan. The "flexibility" is that the states will have more flexibility on how to spend the smaller amounts of money they will receive. Similar to how the states can spend welfare money. Maybe they'll spend it on poor people's rent even if they don't have to? Unlike how they diverted the welfare money when it was awarded in the same way.

To find out what it actually means I read "The Federal Register." "The Federal Register," I recently learned, is the official daily journal of the federal government used to announce notices of proposed rules (allowing public comment), final rules (changes to the law), presidential proclamations, and executive orders. I want to make sure you notice that it is open to public comment. Comments are open until May 1, 2026 on this issue.

After Googling "The Federal Register," it was my top choice. I was greeted by an avalanche of data. The current issue, published April 6, 2026, has 101 documents from 42 agencies consisting of 474 pages. If you don't know what to call what you're looking for, good luck finding it. But I did know what I was looking for. I typed in the name of the proposal and found it. There are only 228 comments as I write this. This topic that will affect millions has less comments than I routinely get on Reddit. This forum should be talked about more and engaged with more. I'd never heard of it until this week. I urge people to comment. Whatever you think, show them we are paying attention.

Most of the people affected by HUD's plan are employed — brutally underemployed, but employed. Deborah Thorpe, deputy director at the National Housing Law Project, said in a statement, "This proposal is based on false and harmful stereotypes, rather than concrete data or best practices, it ignores the fact that most participants in federal housing programs who can work do in fact work. Saving enough to move off of assistance takes a long time and a lot of support."

As of 2023, 50%, more than 22.6 million renters, were cost-burdened, paying more than 30% of their income on living expenses. This includes more than 12.1 million who are severely burdened, spending more than half of their income on housing and utilities. Between 2019 and 2023 the share of renters with cost burdens increased in 43 of 50 states. More than half of all renters were cost-burdened, which indicates paying more than 30% of income on rent, in 13 states and in 50 of the 100 largest metro areas.

Trump is asking HUD to cut rental aid by 40%. Where is he planning on spending all that sweet, sweet poor-people money?

The cost of the current war-crime, based on the Pentagon's briefing to Congress was $11.3 billion for the first six days plus $1 billion/day ongoing.

As housing costs have grown, many households have less money available to cover other necessities. In 2023, renters with incomes below $30,000 had a median of just $250 per month left over after paying for housing. Many are forced to make difficult spending trade-offs between crucial needs, including healthcare, food and retirement savings, according to the 2023 Consumer Expenditure Survey. In those circumstances, how does one save for a deposit on a new apartment, let alone find an apartment that is close in cost to a vouchered apartment in two years? If you have an answer that works please email Groundcover News and I'll write about it.

He's coming for you, too, middle-class readers. While households with lower incomes constitute the bulk of burdened renters, the strain is creeping up the income ladder. Fully 83% of renters earning under $30,000 were cost-burdened in the most recent data, including an astounding 67% with severe burdens. But burden rates were also over 70% for renters earning $30,000-$44,999, an increase of 15 percentage points since 2001. During the same period, burden rates doubled to more than 45% for renters earning $45,000-$74,999.

Lots of statistics to crunch here. These are big numbers. This issue affects millions of our fellow citizens. People doing it right. Working people. The goal posts of the American Dream keep getting moved further out of reach. Nobody should have to choose between food or medicine. Retirement savings are a thing other people do. My $250 a month doesn't stretch as far as I'd like. Dentists? Doctors? Mental health medications? Nope, just rent.

Editor's note: Readers who miss the May 1 deadline to share public comment are encouraged to contact their federal U.S. representatives.

employment **RESOURCE CORNER**

JOB DEVELOPER'S ALLIANCE
A collaborative of 10 community organizations with the mission to help those underserved job seekers find suitable employment. The clients are invited to two events per year to help connect them with employers. Washtenaw County agencies that are represented in the JDA: Ann Arbor Housing Commission, Bureau of Services for Blind Persons, Washtenaw County Office of Community and Economic Development, Department of Corrections - Women's Huron Valley, Jewish Family Services, Michigan Ability Partners, Michigan Rehabilitation Services, Path For Ability Vocation Enterprise, Work Skills Corporation, and Washtenaw Community College Career Services
www.washtenaw.org/4497/Job-Developers-Alliance

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MICHIGAN WORKS
304 Harriet St., Ypsilanti
734-714-9814
Mon.-Wed.-Fri.: 8 a.m.-5 p.m.; Tuesday: 8 a.m.-7 p.m.; Sat. and Sun.: Closed. *Resource room with computers, printers, and copiers; Unemployment pairing — once an active resume is on the state's website; Direct lines to the unemployment office; Workshops; Job fairs twice a month (first and third Thursday of the month); Large annual job fair, often held in May; Helps to train entry level workers so they can move up in positions; Variety of adult programs (depending on needs and wants); Younger youth (14-17 years): out of school and in-school job options; Older youth (18-24 years): summer employment in partnership with U-M; Tuition assistance; Car repair and insurance assistance depending on the program; Work clothing; Mileage to get to/from work/school; Outreach programs: resume training for those exiting jail; Free background checks; Assistance with the $30 for GED classes — must be enrolled in a MI Works program.*

WASHTENAW COMMUNITY COLLEGE ENTREPRENEURSHIP CENTER
The team is available via phone at 734-249-5880, or email at entrepreneurship@wccnet.edu, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday - Friday except for holidays and closures. Explore their website at: www.wccnet.edu/succeed/entrepreneurship-center/index.php/ *The Entrepreneurship Center at Washtenaw Community College is a welcoming resource hub that supports individuals in developing their entrepreneurial capacity. Through thoughtful conversations, partnerships, and programs, those at the college and in the surrounding communities are inspired and driven to actively grow their ventures as professionals, social innovators, or business owners.*

Pallet home proposal shows Ann Arbor doesn't have the language to address the rent crisis, and that's intentional

JAY COOPER
Groundcover contributor

THERE ARE GROSS BUMS OUTSIDE.
ELIMINATE THEM!
WHAT IF WE STOPPED EVICTING PEOPLE?
HAVE THAT RADICAL COMMIE REMOVED! MY PROFITS FEEL THREATENED!
I WANT A RESTRAINING ORDER!
POLICE! KEEP AN EYE ON THAT ONE!
I GUESS WE SHIP THEM OFF TO A SHACK VILLAGE?

At the December 8, 2025 planning session, Ann Arbor City Council heard a report from the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation on the rent crisis. The report (aaacf.org/news/housing-study) doesn't call the situation a rent crisis, they call it a "problem" of "affordability" and referred to "the clear shortage of rental units for higher-income renters" as the reason "an unusually large number of units came online in 2024."

When reports on housing use language like this, when they claim "Single mother families in particular tend to have incomes that create significant affordability challenges," they are redirecting the blame of the rent crisis away from landlords. There is one reason for homelessness, and that is rent. So long as rent exists, there is homelessness, and without it, homelessness disappears. To say that "affordability challenges" are created by people's incomes is to wildly twist reality.

At the very same December 8 planning session, City Council heard a proposal for building a village of shacks. Hank Kelley, the City's deputy planning manager, and Supportive Connections director Johnathan Laye made the presentation. Supportive Connections is the City of Ann Arbor's social support program.

They don't call them shacks, they call them "pallet homes." According to a December 2025 MLive article on the pallets, Kelley said, "Even pets are welcome," as if that's some kind of bonus and not an inherent feature of housing since the dawn of humanity that's only recently been put behind a paywall by landlords.

A village of shacks in Ann Arbor, if we're entertaining the idea they'd ever build such a thing, would be better than the tents (or worse conditions) people are currently living in, but it does not solve homelessness because homelessness is created by rent, and it doesn't address rent.

Shacks aren't meant to address homelessness. They didn't propose a location for the shack village. If they had, history gives us the data to predict that scene: the gentrifiers crying over property values, their unsubstantiated fearmongering about capital flight and crime, as the project gets pushed into less and less viable locations, compromises shave away value, activists get distracted fighting a losing battle over scraps of a project that was never meant to succeed.

Proposing a village of shacks to address homelessness is an insult. There are plenty of vacant homes to house people. The reason the city won't put people up in those homes is because it breaks the illusion that rent is valid. They don't want people who aren't paying ungodly high rent to live in those homes. Those homes are not for people, they are landlord investments meant to generate billions. Those homes are especially not for the class of people they're trying to exterminate. Those homes are to attract "higher-income renters" for the next wave of rent ratcheting. This is settler colonialism. You and your ilk are not desired on this land.

In November, Johnathan Laye and police chief Andre Anderson proposed SPROUT, a joint unarmed response project between Supportive Connections and police. "Unarmed response" is corrupted language. The people did not ask for unarmed response, they asked for "unarmed, non-police response." Just as "open-source" deliberately subverts the politics of free software to co-opt its benefits for the wealthy, just as free breakfast was perverted into means-tested "free and reduced lunch options," just as guaranteed pensions were replaced with fickle 401(k)s, every real proposal for positive change is perverted, corrupted, stripped of its value. It is then resold to you as a means-tested, bureaucratically crippled neoliberal half-measure that masks the source of the problem and serves the wealthy (the source of the problem).

Anyone coordinating, collaborating, cooperating with police is not working to solve homelessness as police are the landlord's legbreakers. When rent is past due, it's the police that landlords send to your home with guns to get you off the land. When the bank forecloses on you, it's the police they send with guns to get you off the land.

Abolishing rent is the solution to homelessness. Saying so scares some people, people who don't pay rent, or people who have been convinced that abolishing rent will somehow hurt their prospects, but be not afraid of abolishing rent, because you have no prospects. Statistically speaking, you will never own a home; any money you think you can squirrel away will be taken from you by ever-ratcheting rents and stagnant wages, as well as wartime gas prices, inflation, shrinkflation, automation, high-speed stock gambling, the coming AI bubble crash, and/or when the firehose of vibe-coded malware "pwns" your bank. Billionaire landlords are insulated from these things. They own a diverse range of capital that feeds them income, your income, which they reinvest into more parasitic capital investments that steal more income.

Have you asked your boss to raise wages? How did they respond? If you haven't, how do you expect they would respond? Lackluster income does not create "affordability challenges." You are kept underpaid to keep profits up. Your rent will increase until you are priced out, then you will be replaced by a slightly wealthier class of people, who will suffer the exact same exploitation just with another zero on the check, and so on, as robber barons eat the city alive.

Understandably most people are afraid of confronting the real villains creating the rent crisis. After all, when your name and face are on your facebook account, naming and shaming your landlord could get you evicted; police might show up at your door and kick you out of your home, then where would you be? Maybe then you'd be homeless.

The only proven method of taking on landlords to get tenant protections is the same as the only proven method of taking on employers for worker protections, unity and solidarity en masse. You alone will never have more sway over your government than billionaire landlords. You alone will never have the power to stop a team of armed police from kicking you out of your home. You alone will never convince your employer to pay you a living wage. If you want housing security, if you want a world without homelessness, you must organize with fellow tenants to protect each other, and eventually, to abolish rent.

Bethlehem United Church of Christ
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Please visit the church website at:
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Jesus didn't turn people away. Neither Do We. United Church of Christ
Sunday Worship Time
10:00 am In-person and via Live Stream

People in the Neighborhood: Travis

JIM CLARK
Groundcover vendor No. 139

Let's meet our neighbor Travis.

"Tell me about yourself, where are you from?" I began.

Travis replied, "I came from the Commonwealth of Virginia. How y'all doing, Yankees?"

"Doing very well, thank you!" I answered and then followed up with this question, "What was your childhood like?"

Travis thought out loud. "Childhood. You know, looking back, I'm not sure what childhood I was supposed to have. I'm from Virginia where smoking tobacco, smoking cigarettes, is just a fact of life. I remember getting burnt by cigarettes in the kitchen of my parents' house. I grew up with parents who were cigarette-smoking alcoholics and stuck in a house which was loaded with nicotine. They were always addicted to something. I was raised to be sick without realizing it. But I'll admit, I was lucky. I wasn't abused (except for the cigarette smoke) and I got to grow up with nice things. Unfortunately, only nothing lasts forever, even here in the land of the free."

"Why do you say that?" I asked.

"Because in 1996 I got hit by a car and almost died," Travis replied without hesitation.

"Oh no! How did that turn out?" I asked.

"Well, here's the thing," he replied, "I don't know. I'm not sure because that was back in 1996 and traumatic brain injury*, head injuries and concussions weren't a thing. They could not give me anything [pain meds] as a kid. But for some reason, they started giving me psychiatric medication."

Travis continued, "People keep trying to slap me with that label because they want to tell me no human is illegal unless you are medically disabled or in some aspect invalid. Are you familiar with that word? *In-vuh-lid?* As in medically invalid? The truth is, I'm sorry to say, that I am iatrogenesis incarnate, a victim of the medical error epidemic. That is why I'm here. Yes, medical errors were what brought me up here to Michigan. And that's why I ended up houseless in the city. Because I got hit by a car."

"But then you couldn't get it, the medical care?" I asked.

"Well, here's the reason why. Because I was branded by the system, OK?" he challenged.

"Branded in what way?" I asked.

"If you are labeled with a mental illness for any reason, no matter how valid or sound it is, guess what? You are dead to rights in the same way a felon is. OK. In fact, even worse than a felon because at least a felon can get the conviction expunged. When it comes to mental illness, for some reason, that's a designation that always makes me a potential criminal," he replied.

Travis pivots slightly left. "Don't you mean thought criminal? Oh, where do I get this wacky idea? George Orwell, 1984. Welcome to the future."

"How did your experience with being unsheltered happen?" I asked.

"Like a lot of millennials, I ended up a boomerang baby. It was tough living with my parents, it did break down; we couldn't get along and I ended up having to leave. When I got up here in Michigan, I was basically homeless. I stayed at the Victory Inn until it was shut down. It was a nasty tobacco den, just like Delonis, just like my childhood home," he replied.

"What happened after Victory Inn?" I asked.

"After Victory Inn, I languished here in the county," he answered, "and while I did have some outside help trying to get money and whatnot, it isn't easy when you don't have private property, which makes it difficult to store food and other necessities for your benefit."

Travis continued, "So that's why I ended up homeless here. I stayed outside because the Delonis Center was not an option. Sleeping outside was cleaner. It was decent in 2022 and 2023. During those winters it was still tepid enough to sleep through, not like the following winters. I slept outside in a sleeping bag in Argo Park under some awnings and buildings. As long as there wasn't heavy precipitation, I was good. I was able to get motels when I needed them, like when there was heavy snow."

"Are you homeless now?" I asked.

"Homeless? Okay, see, I'm not homeless, I never was because, well, George Carlin, home is an abstract idea. Home is what you make it, Joe Dirt, and that's why this house is not your home. Get it? Please, no, not homeless. I was indeed houseless and indigent and having a difficult time finding a place to stay. But I can't say 'homeless' because it turns out that's a legal designation," he replied.

"That's an interesting point of view. Do you know from night to night where you're going to sleep?" I asked.

"Yes. I do have a residence. I'm only poor because my conditions have not improved, even though I got the housing I needed. It's deeply ironic that the place I'm living in was no better than the Delonis Center," he replied.

"So houselessness was in the past, not currently," I clarified.

"My houselessness status does not change in any real way for some reason. I've come to find that in Washtenaw County, I perpetually have the label of homeless under my name if I commit a crime, and that's the way it is," Travis replied. Now he becomes more emphatic. "It's almost like they're subjecting me to third-estate policing or broken-windows policing. Why am I a criminal? Just because I'm homeless and houseless? Oh, am I a landless peasant? Sure. Do you get the picture yet, Yankee?"

Travis added, "I do have housing, yes. I had to go through Avalon Housing to get it, and they made it the worst nightmare ever. I'm at my second unit now. The last unit, let's just say that ended when a Karen called. Why would you send police SUVs to me? I'm on my front porch, hitting my vape, because someone said I was talking to a tree."

"What were you and the tree talking about?" I had to know.

Travis fired back, "If you must know, this tree was just trying to warn me about all the Karens around here. If you would just talk to them [the trees], you would probably know that."

*Signed into law on July 29, 1996 by President Bill Clinton, the Traumatic Brain Injury Act of 1996, known as "the silent epidemic," was specifically designed to address the under-recognized public health crisis of civilian brain injuries.

Reflections on saying 'yes' to the warming center

MIKE JONES
Groundcover vendor No. 113

Another winter has come and gone. Thank you to Zion Lutheran Church, Ann Arbor Friends Meeting House, First Presbyterian Church of Ann Arbor, Lord of Light Lutheran Church, St. Mary's Parish, First Congregational Church of Ann Arbor, First Baptist Church of Ann Arbor, and the Freight House in Ypsilanti for successfully hosting the 2025-26 Daytime Warming Center.

This is a reflection on the May 29 First Presbyterian Church discussion on hosting the Daytime Warming Center for the first time, and its impact on their congregation. On short notice, First Presbyterian Church of Ann Arbor committed to hosting the Daytime Warming Center for the unhoused for two weeks in December.

According to their website, "First Presbyterian Church is an inclusive and diverse faith community, led by the Holy Spirit, who welcomes people of all ages and backgrounds to come together to explore, nurture and deepen their faith. Through worship, shared discussion, participation and service, we aim to make God's love felt throughout our congregation, and community, and echo throughout the world. Our challenge is to serve God with joy and to bear witness to God's transforming love made visible in Jesus Christ."

The Warming Center started this season on November 10, 2025 and finished on March 27, 2026. On March 28, while hosting a Groundcover News stand at the Dance for Mother Earth Powwow, I ran into Resident Pastor Sarah Rutherford of First Presbyterian, and she informed me about the church having a discussion about having said "yes" to the Daytime Warming Center. I couldn't make the discussion in person, so Pastor Rutherford sent me a YouTube video of it titled, "Exploring The Faith / Learning from our Experience of saying Yes to the Warming Center."

In this YouTube discussion Jane Dutton, a former professor for forty years who focuses on compassion in the workplace and a First Pres Church member, explored how this experience affected First Pres volunteers individually and the church community as a whole. Dutton shared

see **YES** page 11 ➡

content CORRECTIONS

In the April 17, 2026 edition of Groundcover News, in "Pinball Pete's comes to the heart of Ann Arbor," the owner of Bill's Beer Garden was incorrectly named. Scot Greig is the owner of Bill's Beer Garden.

In "Disability Revolution Club" a sentence regarding the original leadership of the club was erroneous quoted, and physically redacted from many copies.

community EVENTS

APPRENTICESHIP FAIR
Friday, May 1, 4 - 7 p.m, Ypsilanti High School. *This annual fair, organized by the Job Developer's Alliance, is aimed at high school students and adults looking to find apprenticeships. Attendees have the chance to learn more about apprenticeship programs where participants would learn a skill or trade under a professional in the field on the job. Please register in advance:* www.bit.ly/4iVB6xY

MAY DAY DINNER IN HONOR OF FARM AND FOOD WORKERS
Friday, May 1, 4-7 p.m. Tantre Farm, 2510 Hayes Rd, Chelsea. *Everyone is invited to a deep local dinner. Free to farm and food service workers for their most valuable work. Asking $10 per eater donation. Offered by community farm chef Kori Kanayama and guest chef Farmer Richard Andres.*

YPSI MAY DAY
Saturday, May 2, all day.
11 a.m., 9/11 Memorial (Cross/Perrin), *May Day march.*
12-4 p.m, Frog Island Park, *Workshops and discussions. It's a pot-luck, bring things to share! Childcare will be provided.*
4-7 p.m. Frog Island Park, *Assembly of neighborhood assemblies. Come speak with local popular assemblies and neighborhood rapid response groups. Share best practices, lessons learned, updates and goals.*
8-10 p.m. Frog Island Park, *Documentary film screening of "The Elements of Mutual Aid." The world premiere of the first episode of a 4-part docuseries on liberatory mutual aid.*

PAPER PAPER ART BOOK FAIR
Saturday, May 2, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. and Sunday, May 3, 12-5 p.m. Cluster Museum, 307 N Main St. Ann Arbor. *Paper Paper is an independent art book fair in its first year, organized by artists and held in an independent art space. The fair brings together contemporary artists, small presses and independent publishers working in printed and bound formats. A Zine Swap will also be featured, and anyone is welcome to come peruse, contribute, leave and take a zine during the fair.*

YDL REPAIR CLINIC
Saturday, May 2, 1:30-3 p.m. Ypsilanti District Library-Michigan Ave, Program Room. *Bring your broken zippers, fraying hems, busted bags, and battle-worn jeans. Repair Clinic is free, drop-in, no appointment needed! Just show up with the thing that needs saving.*

A2 ROLLER DERBY
Saturday, May 2, 4:30-8 p.m. Buhr Park Outdoor Ice Arena, 2751 Packard St Ann Arbor. *Home Gamer #1: A2 Roller Derby vs. Detroit. Doors open at 4:30 p.m., game starts at 5 p.m. and 7 p.m.*

STAR WARS DAY (OBSERVED)
Sunday, May 3, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Ann Arbor downtown library, 343 S. Fifth Ave. Ann Arbor. *"May the Fourth Be With You!" You don't need to travel to a galaxy far, far away to celebrate Star Wars Day. Just come to the Downtown Library! We will have photo ops, games, crafts, screenings, music, and more! Costumes are welcome, but please leave lightsabers and blasters at home!*

THE ROAD HOME SCREENING
Thursday, May 7, 6 p.m. Michigan Theater, 603 E. Liberty St., Ann Arbor. *The Road Home is a documentary exploring mental health, housing insecurity and homelessness in Washtenaw County, highlighting community efforts and challenges. Local organizations face fragmented responses, funding cuts and limiting support. The film's goal is to unite stakeholders, raise awareness and inspire collective action to ensure compassionate, sustainable solutions. Reserve your free ticket at marquee-arts.org*

SUSHANNA SHAKUR "MEMORIES OF MY REVOLUTIONARY BROTHER"
Saturday, May 9, 2-4 p.m. Blackstone Bookstore, 214 W Michigan Ave, Ypsilanti. *Join author and lifelong Detroit activist Shushanna Shakur as she discusses and signs her personal memoir about her influential brother, Chockwe Lumumba — the revolutionary attorney, organizer and former Mayor of Jackson, MS. He earned national recognition for unwavering fight for the freedom and empowerment of his people.*

REVOLUTIONARY FOOD GATHERING
Saturday, May 9, 5-7 p.m. Ann Arbor Friends Meeting House, 1420 Hill St., Ann Arbor. *Potluck and discussion to discover who we are in relationship to our food, the earth and each other. Hosted by Groundcover News and Purslane Commons.*

CINETOPIA FILM FESTIVAL
Saturday, May 9, 5-7 p.m. Michigan Theater. *Cinetopia brings audiences and filmmakers together to celebrate bold cinema, independent voices, and films you cannot see anywhere else. Experience a curated lineup designed by people who love film as much as you do. As one of Michigan's premier film festivals, Cinetopia brings together independent films, Michigan-made shorts, and fresh voices from around the world. Every selection is chosen for originality, perspective and impact.*
marquee-arts.org/cinetopia/

DANCE INTO ACTION
Saturday, May 30, 4-8:30 p.m. hear.say brewing, 2350 W. Liberty St., Ann Arbor. *Presented by Pilar's Foundation. Uniting to benefit local immigrant families. Live music by Jive Colossus, Killer Diller, Backbeat Manifesto. Food and drink from Pilar's Tamales and hear.say brewing. Purchase tickets at pilarsfoundation.org or inside Pilar's Tamales.*

Submit an event to be featured in the next edition:
submissions@groundcovernews.com

YPSILANTI DISTRICT LIBRARY

GET TO KNOW YDL!

WHERE TO FIND US:
Online at ypsilibrary.org
Call us at 734-482-4110.

TO GET YOUR LIBRARY CARD:
1) Fill out the easy online form at ypsilibrary.org/library-cards.
2) Call 734-482-4110
3) Or stop by any YDL location!

DON'T HAVE A DRIVER'S LICENSE? We can work with a variety of IDs to get you your card.

Seed Library
All locations (including Bookmobile)

There are more than 200 unique varieties of fruit and vegetable seeds in our Seed Library. Come to any location, including the Bookmobile, to check out our selection, or donate your own extra seeds.

FEATURED EVENT
Spring Native Plant Swap
Sat. | May 16 | 11am-12pm
YDL-Whittaker

Drop by and exchange your favorite native plants with fellow gardeners. Bring your own plants to share and leave with new treasures for your garden!

YPSILANTI DISTRICT LIBRARY

Sentenced beyond bars: the fight for justice at WHV

GEMMA BONNEY
U-M student contributor

"Fix it or shut it down!" rang out from the small crowd gathered on the curb outside of the Central Campus Classroom Building (CCCB) on U-M campus on April 10. The statements "Mold = State Sanctioned Death Sentence" and "Free Krystal Clark!" were written across posterboards and displayed to the public. Cars and a Blue Bus honked in support, and several people driving by looked on in curiosity, unaware that at a correctional facility just 8.6 miles away, there are approximately 1,800 women living in an unsafe environment. Mothers fighting for improved healthcare and living conditions. Daughters fighting for their lives.

Two hours prior to this scene, about 40 people got plates of food and found a seat in Room 0420 of the CCCB. They were gathered there for a Lunch & Learn, before a rally for Justice For Women at Huron Valley.

The event was put on by three organizations including the sociology department's Project Community course; Survivors Speak, a nonprofit with the goal "to give the voices back to those who have been unjustly silenced;" and Michigan Innocence Club, a student-led organization based around innocence work and the criminal justice system. During the information session, attendees heard about the conditions at Women's Huron Valley correctional facility (WHV), along with the story of one woman in particular: Krystal Clark.

WHV is the only women's prison in Michigan, and the conditions are horrendous on every front. As was explained at the Lunch & Learn, women with health issues are repeatedly given inadequate care, or denied it altogether. Their medication is not being given, their dosage is reduced or substitutions are made to their original prescription.

Women have complained about the mold infesting the prison, and there are reports of inmates being ordered to clean it off the walls without masks on, and workers painting over it in order to pass inspections. One woman was in need of mental health assistance and upon request was denied access to the help she needed. She saw guards place bets on her likelihood of committing suicide before later taking her own life. Overall, the facility is costing women their mental and physical health, when it should only be their time they are losing.

Krystal Clark is experiencing health complications due to the mold in the prison. Clark has been incarcerated for over 13 years, and in that time, her health has visibly deteriorated. In 2023 it was found that Clark had the mold Aspergillus growing out of her ears and in her lungs. This common mold can cause diseases "including localized infections, fatal diseases [and] allergic responses," according to the National Library of Medicine. The mold in her ears is visible, and growing to overtake her ears. She is having a hard time breathing, among other issues, and her face is drooping, contributing to the visible difference in her health. Clark is in desperate need of help, and the group championing her cause has recognized that the best person to save her now is Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer.

Whitmer has the ability to provide medical clemency, which is a type of executive pardon. If provided to Clark, she would serve the rest of her sentence outside of jail, and would be able to seek the life-saving care that she needs.

This campaign is about more than just Clark's health and freedom — the broader goal is to get the facility shut down. The women in the prison and the organizations outside who are working on this do not want to see other women suffer the way Clark has.

Anyone can help. People can find links to the emails of the Parole Board as well as Governor Whitmer on the website for Clark's freedom at this freekrystal.com/support/

see **KRYSTAL** page 13

My Mother ...

SAVON SALVADOR
Groundcover vendor No. 273

The outstanding and wise woman, she never gives up hope and never gives in, but faces many obstacles silently. She is my favorite character. She is known as Felicia Wilbert, "Truths or Lies" author to you, but she is known to our family as Mother, granny and friend. My mother cleans, cooks, tussles our obstacles while writing at late hours feeding her fans literature fantasy stories, whether true or false.

People told her she was stupid, ugly and wasn't going to make it and I, her son, encouraged her to focus, breathe and launch because she is beautiful, creative, and she is going to make it! They were haters and they couldn't read anyways. She laughed with confidence knowing I believed in her. I needed her for many years, for her knowledge and strength to complete my essays because I would undergo writer's block.

In the summer, Mom would give me real lemonade squeezed down to the pulp, add sugar, add water and chill it with some ice cubes to help me, and in the winter mama's hot cocoa with caramel drizzled around the coffee cup, warm milk on the stove, cocoa powder with whipped cream and gummy bears with sprinkles on top to warm me up. And it worked, I would write like I was making a song featuring Drake. Moments when I was down, she always slid money to grease my pockets but never overstepped; I would sort clothes and mysteriously there was money in my pockets.

My mother went through dark times. We didn't always have lights, but we had candles to meditate. She didn't even buy anything for herself unless she knew we were covered and that was her rerunning clothes. She just asked God in prayer, "Lord, after all my financial obligations are resolved, may I buy myself some Bath and Body Works so that I may smell outstanding. Amen." Who wouldn't love someone who is unselfish and wholeheartedly supportive? I couldn't trade nobody else with my mother because she was just that caring.

When you see her on Liberty Street in Ann Arbor, uplift her, give her a smile and the biggest hug you can. Because she has had rocks thrown at her instead of marshmallows. She has had family and friends turn on her because she had a vision and purpose. She cried at night because she didn't think there was any help, hope or desire. Her heart sank because they attacked us and wanted to kill her only child and world. She lost everything to build her son back up and keep her only grandchild alive but also safe. That's why she writes, because I told her to write about her pain.

I want you to do that for me, supporters. Don't be rude, be kind and supportive to Felicia Wilbert. I want you to look at your trials and tribulations and reflect on what has happened in your life and reach out and know that as mothers and fathers you can always make it — just try because my mother did it!

I love you Groundcover, I love you Felicia Wilbert — because that's my Mother.

St. Francis of Assisi Parish
"If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and am here; I did not come on my own, but he sent me." + Christ Jesus (John 8:42)
Come Worship With Us!
Mass Schedule
Saturday 5 pm (English) & 7 pm (Spanish)
Sunday 8:30 am, 10:30 am, 12:30 pm, 5 pm
2250 East Stadium Blvd., Ann Arbor
www.StFrancisA2.com 734-821-2100

COMMUTER CHALLENGE 2026

PARTICIPATE IN THE COMMUTER CHALLENGE

MAY 1-31, 2026

The Commuter Challenge encourages community members to choose sustainable transportation for travel to and from work. Individuals and workplaces can win prizes for joining the challenge!

PRIZES INCLUDE:

- Treats from Washtenaw Dairy
- More than a dozen gift cards to local businesses
- Chances to win $50 VISA gift cards from UMCU
- Special drawing for first time participants
- A lunch celebration catered by Sweetgreen!

Sign up at **win.getDowntown.org**

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A library of support

MARIE
Groundcover contributor

Over the past few years I have traveled the country, and while doing so visited several libraries. During my travels, I have experienced library staff attempting to restrict my library use and staff treating people in the library differently based on background.

One library, located in a small town along the northern bank of Lake Huron, upset me so much I painted a sign that said "solid rights protest" and began wearing it around my neck while in the library. When the head librarian returned after a week of being out due to illness, I was surprised to be reunited with a family friend of nearly three decades. For about a month, the librarian and I often enjoyed at least one allergen-friendly meal together a day, while I participated in library activities, was introduced to library patrons, combed through books in an extensive art collection and painted.

Sometimes I opted to paint inside and sometimes I sat outside under the gazebo erected in a small park across from the log cabin style library. When the library was closed I enjoyed the nearby nature trails, watched the comedy of the season's water fowl and attempted to identify different foliage.

Experiencing discrimination and prejudice in this small yet beautiful library sent me on a mission to continue visiting libraries while traveling, and to better understand the experience of unconstitutional barriers to equitable access to library resources. In the process, I discovered that Ypsilanti District Library (YDL) was the first library in Michigan to have a full-time licensed social worker on staff. Unlike most libraries, YDL is working to eliminate or at least decrease access barriers to resources, especially for underserved populations such as the homeless, housing-insecure, elderly, those living in poverty, formerly incarcerated patrons, those experiencing an emergent need or those experiencing a crisis.

Library social work programs may be thought of as an extension of more traditional resource access. Unlike traditional library staff, a library social worker is an extension of the library. They are resource experts with specialized training to help with a trauma-informed, culturally-responsive approach that often extends beyond the walls of the physical library.

YDL's Library Care Coordination (social work) Program began assisting patrons in January 2025, at YDL's Superior branch, with a few EMU social work interns, under the guidance of EMU professors. The social work program at YDL began operating with funding secured for three years, each year contingent on approval, through the Washtenaw County Community Mental Health's portion of the Public Safety and Mental Health Preservation Millage. By April 2025, their first full-time, licensed clinical social worker, Kat Layton, had been hired, and was available when the Michigan Avenue branch reopened after lengthy renovations. Services are available at all three branches of the YDL, however the Michigan Avenue branch presents with a higher need and demand. YDL's LCC program recently entered its second year of the three-year grant.

The American Library Association has a code of ethics and a Library Bill of Rights, to help guide making informed decisions and drive professional improvements "in this changing information environment." YDL recognized that many libraries have policies that limit library access especially for marginalized populations such as the homeless. One example is requiring a qualifying address, or excluding specific addresses known to belong to agencies that serve the homeless such as the Delonis Center.

Some libraries such as those at the University of Michigan Undergraduate library and the Duderstadt offer 24-hour access, which can only be officially accessed by MCard (U-M identification card) holders. Numerous Washtenaw County residents have complained about U-M library staff profiling, accosting, assaulting, looking through belongings and trespassing patrons who are using the library as intended during operational hours. Therefore, it appears U-M and other libraries are regularly violating patrons' constitutional rights to safely and equitably access publicly funded library resources. YDL is reported to have trespassed or limited access for some patrons; however, according to YDL patrons and staff, these restrictions are often related to violence or drug use while on library premises. Fair access to library resources may benefit from federal intervention, similar to formal mandates to desegregate libraries during the 1960s.

YDL is not the first library in the country to introduce social work. The move is modeled after successful efforts including San Francisco, Utah, Minnesota, and New York. San Francisco, in 2009, was the first library in the country to have a full-time social worker. One library system in Arizona opted for a nurse who could address physical health needs on-site and facilitate access to medical care. According to EMU interns for the 2025-2026 school year, other libraries in Michigan have recently started similar social work programs, including Plymouth, Monroe and Grosse Pointe.

YDL's Eastern Michigan University social work interns for 2025-26 school year, Ashley and DesaRay, during a resource fair at YDL.

Ryan Dowd, a well-known shelter director and advocate for serving homeless patrons from the Chicago area, stated, "Staff at public libraries interact with almost as many homeless individuals as staff at shelters do."

Several published resources, local library staff and patrons recognize and value how important libraries are for accessing resources, obtaining guidance, and seeking shelter from the elements.

YDL staff across all of its branches expressed positive feedback related to training developed by Ryan Dowd and from hiring professionals with expertise related to de-escalation, trauma debriefing after traumatic experiences, mental health, and substance use. Library staff feel that, with the addition of social workers, clerks and librarians are better able to manage the expectations of their more traditional assigned roles, while the social workers are better equipped to identify needs, eliminate barriers and link patrons with community resources best suited to those needs before they escalate.

More than a year into its inception the LCC program has grown from a few interns compiling paper resources a few hours a week at the Superior branch. At this time, the library now has a resource table and a white board that is updated weekly, and has transitioned from scheduled appointments to include regularly scheduled drop-in times. A major accomplishment in 2026 was the addition of an interactive online resource list on the YDL website, so physically obtaining paper resources during library hours is no longer necessary.

Since January 2025, the LCC program grew from a few patron contacts at one branch, to over 1300 documented interactions across multiple branches, according to the last quarterly grant report. These documented interactions, however, are known as not fully representative of the true number as numerous contacts are under-documented. At the end of March, EMU was still waiting for Institutional Review Board approval for its formal evaluation process. However, the YDL community speaks highly of program growth and meaningful impact for all patrons.

Services currently available include, but are not limited to, quick access to a hygiene drawer, housing advocacy for both the unhoused or housing-insecure, meals, clothing and obtaining identification from the Secretary of State. During the first year of the LCC, YDL became a Fare Deal Authorized Agency through AATA; expanded resource fairs; and continues to build its partnerships with local organizations.

Layton explained, "Coordinated events and bringing outside partners into the library meet people where they are at."

Social workers, clerks and librarians expressed they are grateful to have supports in place to better serve patrons in a deliberate and meaningful way in the community instead of being limited to confines of the library.

Older patrons have benefited with help navigating discrimination related to housing, as well as questions related to obtaining and maintaining healthcare. Homeless patrons or those living in poverty have been assisted with transportation, phones and paperwork. Patrons who were not born in the United States have been assisted with obtaining replacement documents, addressing language barriers and obtaining immigration paperwork. They can feel better knowing the community is willing to support them as evidenced by the response to a recent ICE raid across the street from the downtown YDL branch. During the April raid, ICE agents stopped traffic, and ICE whistles were reportedly heard being blown across several city blocks.

One patron, who is a homeless young adult, stated, "Most of the resources we already know about. The difference is that Kat doesn't just give you the piece of paper for you to figure it out. Kat gives you step-by-step instructions, and

see **LIBRARY** next page ➡

MARQUETTA Q CLEMENTS
Groundcover contributor

Dear Crack,

I love that I hate you
I hate that I love you
Placed not a dime above you
Honestly, I trust you
How do you break and build me?
Capture but I feel free
Puppet Master
Along you string me
I just want to feel peace
Can't heal unless the pain sinks
Choose you over my dreams
Choose you over family
Alone and weak, I'm Bambi
Conquered fears without thee
Surrender all, Defeat
With sobriety I am King
With you, I can't see me
I'd probably end up 6 deep
Scared to go beneath
God please protect and mold me
A fiend that's the old me
You no longer control me
I miss you, I claim boldly
But I will not let you hold me
Goodbye dear friend, I'm worthy

Dear Alcohol,

Is this love?
Is this real?
I gave you all of me
You don't seem to to care how I feel
I accomplish a goal
Celebrate with you as a meal
You pick a fight with my emotions
And I destroy everything I've built
Why do you hurt me?
Why do I let you?
I feel ashamed that I kept you
Misused and abused
Everyday I regret you
I'm boo boo the fool
And today, I accept the truth
This toxicity is poison
I choose me
I am woken
I admit I am broken
Tunnel vision, I am focused
I choose God
And I noticed
This life chapter I'm closing
I am free

Stigma vs. Everybody

DAVID CRANE
Groundcover contributor

We say we want to be seen.
But being seen is exposure.
So we represent the version that won't get rejected and call it growth.
Don't confuse survival with healing.
We don't thrive in chaos; we adapt to it.
Intensity feels like home.
Peace feels like a setup.
We don't fear being misunderstood.
We fear being understood.
Being seen doesn't free you —
It removes your excuses.

Paid in Silence

DAVID CRANE

No one claps when you choose restraint.
No crowd gathers when you swallow anger and let it die unnamed.
But somewhere —
in the quiet architecture of your own mind —
a foundation sets that no chaos can collect from.

➡ **YES** from page 6

insightful, impactful stories and reflections from volunteers who served our unhoused neighbors. This discussion helps to discern how faith-based organizations can make a difference in their community through engagement projects like hosting the Daytime Warming Center.

I watched the video in full and was impressed by the discussion and the impact it had on this place of worship and its congregation.

Dutton led the discussion where church members listened and participated in meaningful dialogue. Throughout the presentation Dutton showed video interviews of Church member volunteers who expressed their experiences journeying into the unknown. During these interviews one can observe that the interviewees experienced meaningful purpose from hosting the DWC.

In one of the interview sessions, Pat Gilbreath expressed that she felt as if, "We were not just helping them, we were helping ourselves ... We felt kinda like the Grinch. Our hearts grew three sizes because the response received from our unhoused neighbors was amazing. It made us feel wonderful."

A different volunteer, Andy Price, said with a hint of emotion during the interview, "I've enjoyed talking to you these past couple of weeks, but I hope I don't see you here next year."

Pastors interviewed included Associate Pastor Melissa Anne Rogers, Associate Pastor Mark Mares, Resident Pastor Hanna Richards, and Resident Pastor Sarah Rutherford.

Church volunteers interviewed included Pat Gilbreath, Daine Knibbs, Andy Price, Daine Tamblyn.

The first interview was with Resident Pastor Rutherford. She set the scene on how they became the host for the DWC. Rutherford explained how there were several meetings with DWC staff in preparation before actually hosting the DWC. From December 8-19, during record low temperatures, First Pres utilized 45 church member volunteers for the two-week period.

"Hosting the DWC on short notice stretched us logistically, but as we reflect on the experience afterwards, I am overwhelmed with gratitude for the gift of hosting our neighbors. It was a blessing for our congregation to grow in Christ's love for all people," said Resident Pastor Rutherford.

Shoutout to Lead Pastor David Prentice-Hyers and a big thank you to all who volunteered at the Daytime Warming Center.

➡ **LIBRARY** from last page

makes sure you have what you need to accomplish it. She will tell you exactly what buses you need to take, and makes sure you have the bus fare to do it ... I would really like to start a youth group for teens and young adults that teaches de-escalation and actively gets them involved in the community through activities. It's harder to get two people to become friends than it is to get two people to fight."

Kat explained that her goals included "not just helping people, but assisting them so they will be able to help someone else accomplish the same task in the future ... I wasn't trying to completely reinvent the wheel. The goal is to prevent duplication of services, identify gaps, and serve as a resource hub."

Like San Francisco, YDL hopes to eventually have peers integrated into the programming. (Peers are people with lived experience who receive training to use their experiences to help others navigate similar situations.)

On April 15, during its monthly board meeting, YDL trustees announced they had hired a new licensed social worker. Kat transitioned this quarter to a new job developing programming with the state. During a recent interview, Kat shared she cried several times after making the very difficult decision to move on to the new opportunity. According to the YDL Board of Trustees, the new library social worker, Tommy, is scheduled to begin work on May 4, and is expected to be working full-time by the end of the month.

Arguably, Kat was a great fit to help "kick-start" YDL's library social work program, as she was already well-known and trusted by the community members she was serving. The new social worker, according to the Board of Trustees, has years of experience in the field and has a spouse who is a librarian. While the personnel may change and there may be modifications to the program we can't currently predict, the social work pilot will continue.

AI digital transformation: community interests, socio-technological impacts and the future of work

From the perspective of ethics and human values, Professor Eric Swanson of the U-M Philosophy Department and Anja Sheppard, PhD student in Robotic AI at the University of Michigan College of Engineering, have shared their ideas.

Will: What is Artificial Intelligence (AI)?

Anja: Generally, we define artificial intelligence as something that mimics human intelligence, and when people think about AI, they might think about ChatGPT. There is actually a debate on whether this counts as artificial general intelligence because ChatGPT, which is an LLM (Large Language Model), has not accomplished human reasoning. LLMs are very good at generating language. If I ask it to write an essay for me, it would sound very human-like. But the underlying ideas of the essay may not be factually correct or make sense. And this is the reasoning gap that I was talking about.

Will: Why do interdisciplinary researchers call AI "digital transformation?"

Anja: I think people are thinking about AI as a transformation or a revolution because it is going to substantially change how people live, learn and work. Just think about the internet, which similarly revolutionized the way we live today.

Will: What is the difference between Artificial General Intelligence (AGI) and Robotic AI (RAI)?

Anja: So, the big challenge for robotics is actually physically engaging with the world. Robots have to safely operate to complete physical tasks. This involves understanding sensory information such as from cameras, microphones, radars and lidars (light detection and ranging). This differs from AI like ChatGPT because robotics have to understand more sensors and they have outputs, with physical commands. ChatGPT takes in text and outputs texts. It is a fundamentally harder problem to design AI for robotics. Why? Because there is far more text-based information on the internet which can help us train AI like ChatGPT than there is data about robots. You cannot use the internet as a source of training data for robot AI.

Will: A couple of years ago, ChatGPT made a huge splash in the mass media and the high tech world. Tell us more about what ChatGPT is. What are the benefits? What are the consequences?

Anja: ChatGPT is a LLM. It is very good at generating texts. But the drawback is that it is not always trustworthy because it is prone to hallucination, or making things up, basically. [There are] benefits, for one example, in programming or coding, ChatGPT is very good. This makes programming a lot more efficient, and less tedious. In general, people see it as a tool that improves efficiency. As a consequence, improving efficiency can take away some of the humanity in our work. For example, in the arts, what does it mean to watch a movie written by an AI versus made by human beings?

WILL SHAKESPEARE
Groundcover vendor No. 258

Anja Sheppard (left), PhD student in Robotic AI at the University of Michigan College of Engineering, and Professor Eric Swanson (Right) of the U-M Philosophy Department have shared their ideas on AI from the perspective of ethics and human values.

Will: Our readers may want to learn more about how AI would displace many jobs, especially factory work and other occupations such as engineering, writing, journalism, legal researchers, librarians, teachers, movie roles, healthcare or hospitality services.

Anja: The jury is still out on this. We are still trying to understand how AI will impact the workforce. There are already reports of entry-level programming jobs being out. So, coming up with strategies to mitigate a huge loss of jobs is really important. The federal government has a job to do: protect people from displacement by regulating the AI industry.

Will: What is the future of AI technology in American society within the next two years? Within the next five years? Within the next 10 years?

Anja: I do not think I have a good answer for this. I just say that AI will impact pretty much everything we do.

Questions asked of Dr. Eric Swanson

Will: What are the general and specific impacts on American society of AI? Any hope for Gen Z students who major in computer science?

Eric: Great question! Current AI has two impacts on American society, culture, and work that I especially want to highlight.

The first is that AI really isn't the sort of thing that makes *commitments* to people. Instead, its outputs are more like a prediction that is influenced by what people in general want to hear. By contrast, a person generally has a point of view that involves certain commitments. One person's point of view involves being a farmer, another person's involves being a physical therapist, and their expertise and experience influence their commitments. AI isn't anything like that. It'll be interesting to see to what extent people embrace or reject a form of life that doesn't have the kinds of commitments that we do.

The second impact involves what the French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre called 'seriality.' When we relate to each other in a 'serial' way, Sartre says, we are anonymous to each other and interchangeable with each other. We don't have any shared project or goals. It's like waiting for a bus; our actions are organized by waiting in a line, but your project of getting where you need to go isn't really related to my project of getting where I need to go. We don't share projects or goals with current AI at all; we treat it serially and its treatment of us has lots of serial properties. Of course, in some ways it's good for AI to treat us anonymously! But I wonder whether the influence of AI will make people treat each other as interchangeable in new ways. This might make people less inclined to make commitments to each other, and I'm not really sure what that would look like. I myself suspect that it would be a sadder, less meaningful world, but perhaps another interesting perspective is that it would be a freer one.

Will: In view of the divergent views of AI from the mass media, what is the public interest? What are the ethical concerns from the perspective of public values?

Eric: Another great question, and it interacts with the first!

In part because AI doesn't make commitments and we don't make commitments to it, and because our interactions with it are relatively serial, it's pretty easy to just throw it at a problem and see what happens. It's not like it'll get mad at you or resent you in any meaningful way! And going back to your first question, you can just tell it that it's overreacting if it does produce mad sounding text, and close your browser if you want! People do ignore and dismiss each other, but it's not as easy to do. And people who know you could just ask AI will sometimes resent you *not* just asking AI. But the drudge work involved with trying and failing to make progress on problems is absolutely crucial to becoming an expert on something. It's going to be a real challenge to figure out how to balance the availability of a shortcut with the importance of struggling to understand. So much in philosophy *is* the struggling to understand — better understanding the nuances of the question you started with without necessarily answering every aspect of it. I hope AI use in colleges and universities doesn't make that seem less valuable than it is.

History of AI

The online magazine "Tableau" discussed the origin and development of artificial intelligence. It is suggested that AI can be traced to the Ancient Greek period of 400 B.C.:

"The idea of 'artificial intelligence' goes back thousands of years, to ancient philosophers considering questions of life and death. In ancient times, inventors made things called 'automatons' which were mechanical

see **AI** next page ➡

A Mother Attending Her Daughter's Prom

A Mother attending her daughter's Prom
What anticipation
To see Her wearing her glorious head covering
on her, anticipating Prom day
Then her full length Dress
that reflects Her First, her true Accomplishment Shine
And that is to cover Herself while working on her true Self
Her Worth!!!
The way She stands on that stage and smiles
For Her true accomplishments are,
Her knowing that to this day
It took awhile...
Now She has made Her goals Realities!!
Yet, I Knew that...
Although I was made to be absent from your,
Head Start, Elementary, and Middle School Graduations...
I will be on Time for all of the preparations and
Wanted as Well as Needed Presence for
My Baby Girl's upcoming Prom
Who has become More of A Beautiful Young Lady, Always My Baby Girl,
My Precious, Beloved Daughter!!!
With "A Mother Attending Her Daughter's Prom!!!"

LA SHAWN COURTWRIGHT
Groundcover writer

➡ **KRYSTAL** from page 8

There are sample emails written out right there on the website for anyone willing to take a few short minutes to copy and paste a message. Writing physical letters is also helpful, and the Governor's address is listed on that same page. More information is listed on the website for anyone interested in learning more about Krystal Clark, Women's Huron Valley correctional facility or how to be involved in their cause.

Just before heading out, Clark spoke to the people there rallying via a phone call. People were moved not only by the pain in Clark's voice and words, but also by her resolve to continue to fight. She is a victim of an unjust situation and a clear violation of the 8th Amendment — the prohibition of cruel and unusual punishment. As Washtenaw County Commissioner Yousef Rabhi proclaimed during the rally, Clark was sentenced to time behind bars, not to lose her health. Her debt to society was not to be paid for with her life. Clark extended her gratitude to everyone in the room, and provided those participating with a greater sense of what their voice was being used for. They all filed outside and held their signs proudly while demanding that the state "fix it or shut it down!" *Krystal Clarks's family has organized a fundraiser to support her medical care upon release,* www.freefunder.com/campaign/medical-help-4-krystal

➡ **AI** from last page

and moved independently of human intervention. The word 'automaton' comes from ancient Greek, and means 'acting of one's own will.' One of the earliest records of an automaton comes from 400 BCE and refers to a mechanical pigeon created by a friend of the philosopher Plato. Many years later, one of the most famous automatons was created by Leonardo da Vinci around the year 1495." Search the "Tableau" website for more information.

AI as we know it today was born between 1950 and 1956. The maturation of AI was from 1957 to 1979. Some scientists give credit to mathematician Alan Turing for the computer science programming language which revolutionized systems technology during and after World War II. After Turing, there were several scientists. Edward Feigenbaum and Joshua Lederberg were some of the early people who in 1965 created the first "expert system" which is described as a form of AI "programmed to replicate the thinking and decision-making of human beings."

The Lawrence Livermore National Research Lab of UC Berkeley discussed the topic, "The Birth of Artificial Intelligence (AI) research in terms of key eras and concepts." The lab suggested that symbolic AI started in the 1950s to the 1980s with a focus on using logic and rules to represent knowledge. The machine learning of the 1990s focused on algorithms that allowed computers to learn from data.

The third key concept (2010 to the present) focuses on deep learning which features a subset of multi-layered machines which work together as neural networks to process complex data, learn from the data, and act independently.

In 1956, at the Dartmouth University conference on Alan Turing's work on machine intelligence, John McCarthy coined the term "AI." The bottom line, according to the Lawrence Livermore National Lab, is that "early research focused on symbolic reasoning, followed by expert systems in the 1980s, eventually shifting to machine learning and deep learning driven by big data, leading to the current era of "Generative AI."

IBM.com provides the definition of Generative AI: "Generative AI, sometimes called gen AI, is artificial intelligence (AI) that can create original content such as text, images, video, audio or software code in response to a user's prompt or request." It continues, "Generative AI relies on sophisticated machine learning models called deep learning models - algorithms that simulate the learning and decision-making processes of the human brain. These models work by identifying and encoding the patterns and relationships in huge amounts of data, and then using that information to understand users' natural language requests or questions and respond with relevant new content."

Community interests and concerns

Recently, the news media, social media and college communities have been talking about AI. Today, the American public and Washtenaw County residents are trying to digest and make sense of all the new headlines — good or bad?

On March 16, 2026, some Groundcover News writers, vendors, and volunteers attended the Eastern Michigan University "Generative AI" conference. In Ann Arbor, at the University of Michigan, there have been several meetings and conferences on AI in recent times. Across the U-M campus, many students and faculty members have been talking about the AI effects on young people's careers and employment prospects.

From the government perspective, AI must be regulated because of the effects on children and teens. Parents have expressed numerous concerns about chatbots like ChatGPT, GEMINI, and CLAUDE which have negative influences on the lives of young people. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has launched an inquiry into chatbots which act as companions to consumers. The FTC has issued section 6(b) orders to seven companies that operate consumer-facing chatbots. Below is the FTC's regulatory statement:

"Protecting kids online is a top priority for the Trump-Vance FTC, and so is fostering innovation in critical sectors of our economy," said FTC Chairman Andrew N. Ferguson. "As AI technologies evolve, it is important to consider the effects chatbots can have on children, while also ensuring that the United States maintains its role as a global leader in this new and exciting industry. The study we're launching today will help us better understand how AI firms are developing their products and the steps they are taking to protect children."

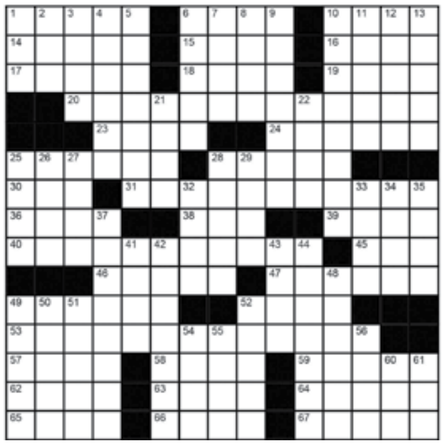
From the business perspective, AI is a bonanza for efficiency and profitability. For the manufacturing industry, robotic AI has helped the bottom line by the adoption of Lean manufacturing which increased the use of robots as a tool in the production process. U-M professor Jeffrey Liker is well known for his research and book titled, "The Toyota Way" about the Lean process. The Silicon Valley and Wall Street business ventures are bullish about the transformation of business organizations and market capitalization of AI-related products. Computer chip manufacturer NVIDIA and other high-tech companies are talking about multi-trillion dollars in the value of their stocks. They have said very little about high-tech workers who will be displaced or fired.

There is a belief that AI will change everything in business and society. How can we deal with the issues of massive AI data centers and rising consumer energy costs?

AI is spreading like wildfire. We urge communities such as Washtenaw County to hold community conversations on AI, human values and the future of work. Questions about AI need to be explored and answered in high-engagement meetings. Sharing ideas and feeling empowered can go a long way to help our society deal with the challenges and potential impacts of AI.

CROSSWORD

International Network of Street Papers



ACROSS
1. "We're #1!," e.g.
6. Low-___ diet
10. Computer architecture acronym
14. Kind of ticket
15. ___-Altaic languages
16. "What's gotten ___ you?"
17. Pricker
18. Japanese soup
19. Hardly haute cuisine
20. Clerical drudges
23. "___ Flux"
24. Couch
25. Laborer who moves bricks (Brit.)
28. A Judd
30. "___ we having fun yet?"
31. Pristine
36. Drop, to an editor
38. Cow chow
39. French Sudan, today
40. Commiserator's words
45. Mother Teresa, for one
46. Whip
47. Fit as a ___
49. Mark over a long vowel
52. Worse than fair
53. Sophomore, e.g.
57. Old European capital
58. ___ Bowl
59. Flooded
62. Coagulate
63. Carbon compound
64. Bar offering
65. Does some tailoring
66. Regard
67. Neuters

DOWN
1. Short order, for short
2. "___ Baby Baby" (Linda Ronstadt hit)
3. Above
4. Current
5. Open rear seat in old cars
6. Spice in Indian cooking
7. Husk
8. Coarse file
9. Loose garment pulled in at the waist
10. Conservative doctrine
11. Arm of the sea
12. Cache
13. Small woods
21. N.Y. neighbor
22. 18-wheeler
25. Muslim pilgrimage
26. After-lunch sandwich
27. Kosher ___
28. Civil rights org.
29. Chemical compound
32. "___'s the breaks!"
33. Full house, e.g.
34. Jewish month
35. Sup
37. Petitions
41. God with a hammer
42. Slouched over
43. Roswell sightings
44. Organic matter used for fuel
48. Draft
49. Soil enricher
50. Like an old woman
51. Kind of drive
52. Church song
54. "Clair de ___"
55. ___ vera
56. Houston acronym
60. Diffident
61. Towel stitching

Groundcover News is seeking more crossword writers! If you are interested in contributing crosswords to our paper on a regular basis, please reach out at contact@groundcovernews.com

Fool Moon

EMERI JADE BEY
Groundcover vendor No. 660

In April's teasing, temperamental light,
When winter loosens but won't quite concede,
The streets of Ann Arbor bloom overnight
With papier-mâché dreams and riotous creed.

FestiFools rises—half jest, half lore—
A carnival stitched from wit and glue,
Where giants wobble and spirits roar
In colors no ordinary springtime knew.

A dragon of headlines bends through the square,
Satire stitched in its shimmering scales;
A politician puppet with windblown hair
Trips over punchlines the crowd unveils.

There's laughter loud as a Midwest sky,
Children pointing at creatures absurd,
While elders grin as the fools go by—
Truth disguised in the ridiculous word.

The air tastes faintly of paint and rain,
Of cardboard kingdoms and clever deceit;
Each step a dance on the edge of the sane,
Each float a question rolling down Main Street.

For here, the world is turned askew,
Not broken—just tilted to help us see:
That folly, when it's honest and true,
Is another form of clarity.

And when the last grand puppet dips from view,
And the drums fade soft into memory's pool,
Ann Arbor returns—yet somehow new—
Forever marked by the wisdom of fools.

Liz dressed in a fuzzy purple monster costume enjoying the Fool Moon street party with her friend.

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS *April 17, 2026 edition*

5	9	1	3	6	2	4	8	7
4	8	6	1	5	7	3	2	9
3	7	2	4	8	9	6	5	1
6	3	8	9	1	4	5	7	2
1	2	7	5	3	6	9	4	8
9	4	5	7	2	8	1	6	3
2	5	3	6	7	1	8	9	4
7	1	9	8	4	5	2	3	6
8	6	4	2	9	3	7	1	5

Reinforced spring recollections

GREGORY MAISONVILLE
Groundcover contributor

A tea at Moka coffee house after Easter mass at St. Mary's Student Parish has me in a pleasurable remembrance of yesterday's merriment at Hash Bash. The "He has risen" philosophy ties in well with the buoyant atmosphere of business and the recreational bliss awarded now to tokers. Much alike to Christ's early following, an underground wave of resistance has solidified for a superior society and negated the former mainstreamesque views of closed-mindedness.

Hard not to notice the similarities of the clusters of followers today at church with the groups of tokers yesterday, all of whom wear the faces of expectancy for want of a notable difference in thought — dismissing the heavy-handedness of our society to the foils of yesteryear, and the building blocks of mercy and forgiveness laying claim to our constructive approach to a future merged with the earnest appreciation of our elder-taught timeless altruisms, albeit mixed with their deficiency of morality at times in the past.

Like most people, spring is a very important time for me … March 17 celebrating my Irishness, the 22nd being my 10-year sobriety date from my drug of choice — alcohol; the 26th my 55th birthday; April 1 and the Artemis 2 launch to the moon; Hash Bash and Easter. All was incorporative of my individual specificities that define who and what I am in a mental pragmatic semblance of what my future holds from the melancholic to euphoric past. A typical example would be my substantive prayers for those astronauts making it safely into space, due to the nightmare of when a vice-principal knocked on the door of Mrs. Guest's 11th grade French class to inform us of the tragedy that would shape our views on space exploration for decades to come. (Mrs. McAuliffe and crew will be with us always.) Now the recently launched Artemis is poised to irrevocably bind the younger generations to the magnitude of space exploration and colonization … what a wonderful world, Louis Armstrong and Ray Bradbury would say.

Back to the Hash Bash, where a drone about 200 feet to the northeast was seen as speaker after speaker filled the crowd with the problems of our forlorn federal government attitude towards any change, any despondency like the sentence of John Sinclair, quickly flitters off like the pigeons flying around from the rooftops or my first bumble bee of the season floating past. I'm perched on the ramp of Hatcher's graduate library. The view is excellent, and after a joint the size of two fingers crammed into the large side of a conical tube is inhaled, a placative relaxation assumes control.

Speakers of note were a handicapped woman who got the crowd in her grasp with a furor of freedoms mixed with some salty language that made me smile. The next, a man in a top hat and scarf who was clearly a staple of Hash Bash for years. "Why did it take our government 50 years to realize pot doesn't kill anybody?" Sound question and a pupil of his I was. You do a lot of thinking high, and I could tell I was on good ground — ground covered before my birth. Even their footprints of fight and freedom still hold against the test of time's magnanimous hold.

I lit a cigar, a luxury for a homeless man like me, careful not to send an ash on the people below like I did earlier. Then came my two high points of the day. First: a man called Tom Lavigne took the podium. He is a lawyer who currently spearheads the fight for marijuana legislation and acceptance. I immediately noticed his verbiage was prepared and insightful, and recollections of my own turmoils won or lost filled the fanciful mind I now participated in, as each of his fist pumps swayed those who remained to cheer and applaud. I hope someday to honor his speech and to fight with any society that displays authoritarian proclivities to settle human debate.

Second was the jam band that I was unable to get the name of, but who lived up to the status of opening act of Hash Bash. Instantaneously I was whisked into a Deadhead feel of imaginary tie-dyed shirts and dresses dancing in all the empty spots — a veritable Woodstock played out in my high but harmless mind. The singer gave quite a speech, holding up a small sequoia for testament to his belief in growth and renewal. I pranced mentally, and wobbled physically, LOL, a little with the music and scheme of things.

In the middle of a very capturing groove of the fourth song, sprinkles of rain tingled my nose and alerted us that the looming dark cloud sneaking up from behind the library was going to have the final say … by the end of the song it was pouring.

Many hung around since the cloudburst was over and gone in 20 minutes. So I put up my U-M blue and maize umbrella and struck out down the ramp, my confidence fully restored in the rogue fundamentals that made this country what it is. That all should fight for what you believe in so that peace may be attained through the salient stewards of equality, freedom of religion and person, and the spirit of what's best for all and harmful to none.

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An adapted family recipe for lasagna

AMANDA GALE
Groundcover vendor No. 573

This recipe originated from a Dearborn, Mich. Ford Motor Company cafeteria kitchen at which my Beloved Granny worked when I was a little girl.

Ingredients
1 box lasagna pasta
1 jar Prego spaghetti sauce
2 cans tomato sauce
2 Lb ground meat with finely chopped garlic and onions
1 Lb ricotta cheese
1 egg; mix ricotta cheese and egg together
2 packages mozzarella cheese
Parmesan cheese

Directions

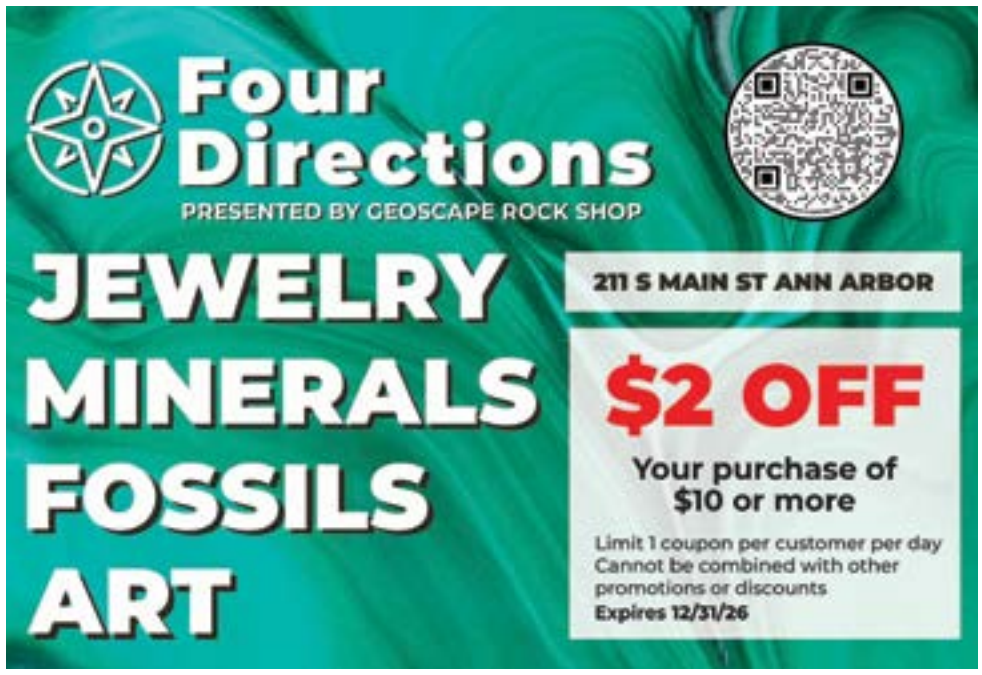
Prep a tasty sauce for pasta; ie, a sauce you use for spaghetti, Prego for example. Fry finely chopped onions and garlic; when onions are clear on surface, though 'filmy' within, add the ground meat and cook until meat is cooked. Add the ground meat along with the finely chopped onions and garlic to a large, round boiling pot that has the pasta sauce (such as Prego) and two cans of tomato sauce already simmering in it. Alternate simmering and boiling pasta as necessary, ie, with the ground meat and onions and garlic also w/in it; cook about two hours until all is fully cooked.

Meanwhile, boil the Lasagna pasta strips for about five to ten minutes, until pasta is bendable (pasta does not have to be fully cooked at this point, only bendable).

Start layering when pasta is cooked enough to bend and drained, put one layer of pasta in a baking pan, then put a layer of sauce, on that put some ricotta cheese, then a layer of mozzarella, and a little bit of parmesan cheese. Repeat layering as before and continue with layers until your layers are complete; Place pan in oven when layers are done, for about 1 ½ hours at 325 degrees. ENJOY! :) !!

Some additional possible adaptations for lasagna, from Amanda

Alternately, ground meat and finely chopped onions and garlic can be mixed together, formed into meatballs and cooked that way and then added to sauce. Variations of cheese combinations can be used, such as shredded cheddar with or without mozzarella, and Romano with or without parmesan. My Family added dried rosemary and dried basil, along with Parmesan and Romano at intervals right into the sauce — it gets absorbed and greatly brings out the flavor. Additional toppings such as mushroom, hickory smoked, applewood, or honey ham chunks, chicken chunks, olives, and green pepper can also be used/included. It's probably BEST to boil the Lasagna strips, though Lasagna can also be baked directly if water-immersed in baking pan. Sometimes Lasagna might need to be baked at 350 degrees for three hours — especially if not pre-boiled and/or depending on oven.



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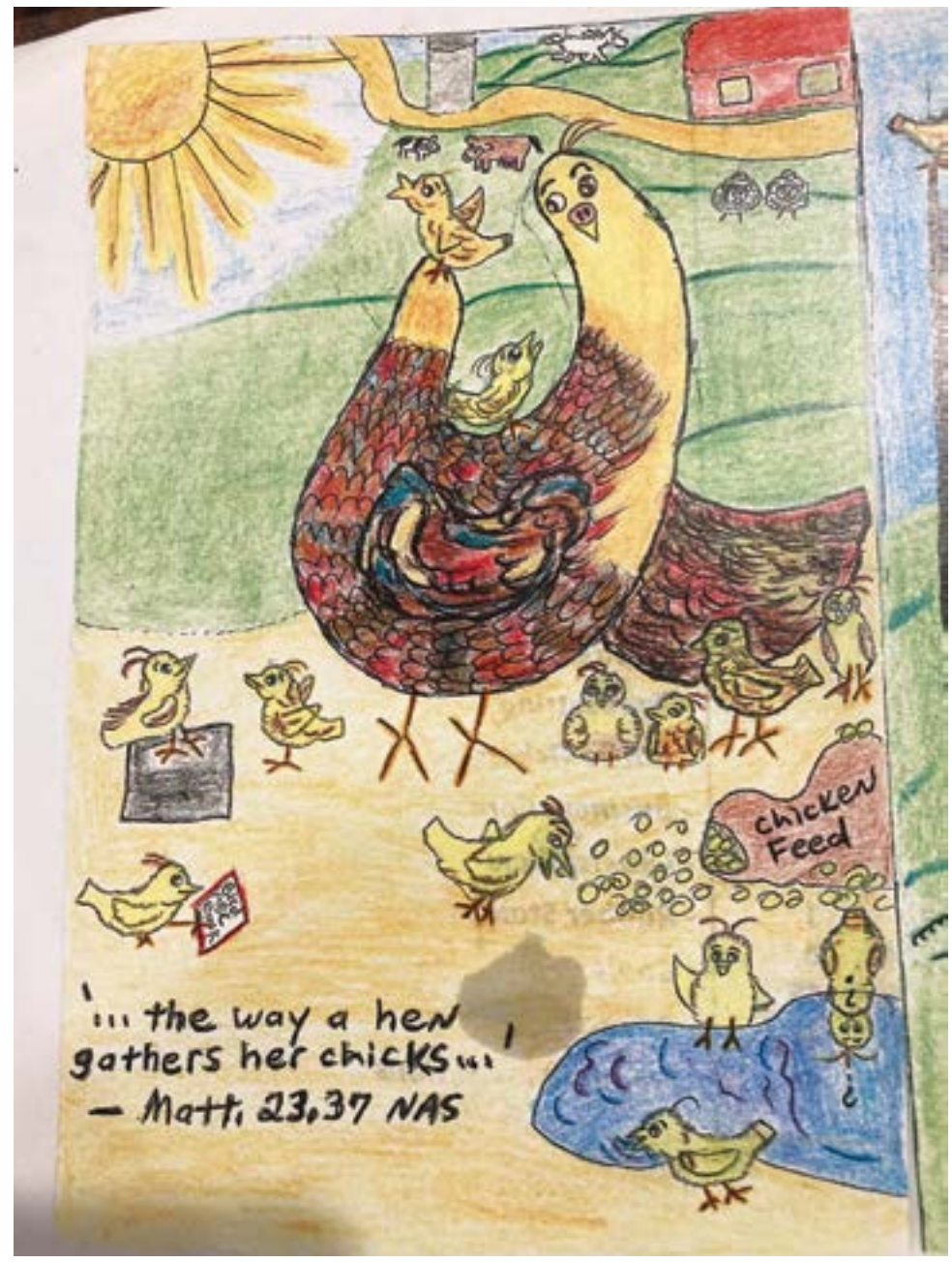

By Amanda Gale, Groundcover vendor no. 573